

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A centerfilled chewing gum composition comprising a shell portion and a centerfill portion, said centerfill portion comprising at least one non-water soluble or sparingly water soluble calcium-containing compound suspended in the centerfill portion and being relatively uniformly dispersed therein without settling, and being present in an effective amount[,] sufficient to provide at least the minimum daily nutritional amount of calcium to a user by chewing a reasonable number of 3 to 5 pieces of the chewing gum composition per day.

Claim 2 (original): The chewing gum composition of claim 1 wherein the centerfill further comprises a suspending agent.

Claim 3 (original): The chewing gum composition of claim 2 wherein the suspending agent is selected from the group consisting of alginate, pectin, gelatin, starch, modified starch, and carboxymethylcellulose.

Claim 4 (original): The chewing gum composition of claim 2 wherein the suspending agent has a molecular weight such that a 1% to 2% aqueous solution of the suspending agent imparts a viscosity of from about 500 to 10,000 cps to the centerfill portion.

Claim 5 (original): The chewing gum composition of claim 4 wherein the viscosity is from about 2,000 to 6,000 cps.

Claim 6 (original): The chewing gum composition of claim 5 wherein the viscosity is from about 2,500 to 5,500 cps.

Claim 7 (original): The chewing gum composition of claim 1 wherein the calcium-containing compound has an average particle size of less than about 17 microns.

Claim 8 (original): The chewing gum composition of claim 7 wherein the calcium-containing compound has an average particle size of from about 0.4 to 17 microns.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The chewing gum composition of claim 8 wherein the calcium-containing ~~composition~~ compound has an average particle size of from about 2 to 8 microns.

Claim 10 (original): The chewing gum composition of claim 7 wherein the calcium-containing compound is calcium carbonate having an average particle size of from about 3 to 5 microns.

Claim 11 (original): The chewing gum composition of claim 1 wherein from 45 to 55% of the calcium-containing compound is particle size of from about 0.6-1.0 microns and the remaining 55 to 45% has a particle size of about 14-17 microns.

Claim 12 (original): The chewing gum composition of claim 11 wherein the calcium-compound is calcium carbonate, and wherein 50% of the calcium carbonate has a particle size of about 0.8 micron and 50% has a particle size of about 15 microns.

Claim 13 (canceled without prejudice).

Claim 14 (currently amended): The chewing gum composition of claim 1 the calcium-containing compound is ~~selected from the group consisting of~~ calcium carbonate, ~~calcium citrate, calcium lactate, calcium gluconate, calcium maleate, calcium phosphate and mixtures thereof.~~

Claim 15 (original): The chewing gum composition of claim 1 wherein the centerfill portion further comprises at least one ingredient selected from the group consisting of vitamins, minerals, mineral salts and botanicals.

Claim 16 (canceled without prejudice).

Claim 17 (previously canceled without prejudice).

Claim 18 (original): A method of delivering an effective amount of calcium to the oral cavity of a human being comprising chewing 3 to 5 pieces of the chewing gum composition of claim 1.

Claim 19 (currently amended): A centerfilled chewing gum composition comprising a shell portion and a centerfill portion, said centerfill portion comprising a suspending agent and at least one non-water soluble or sparingly water soluble calcium-containing compound having an average particle size of less than about 17 microns, suspended in the centerfill portion and being relatively uniformly dispersed therein without settling, and being present in an effective amount[,] sufficient to provide at least the minimum daily nutritional amount of calcium to a user by chewing a reasonable number of 3 to 5 pieces of the chewing gum composition per day.

Claim 20 (previously presented): The chewing gum composition of claim 19 wherein the suspending agent is selected from the group consisting of alginate, pectin, gelatin, starch, modified starch, and carboxymethylcellulose.

Claim 21 (previously presented): The chewing gum composition of claim 19 wherein the suspending agent has a molecular weight such that a 1% to 2% aqueous solution of the suspending agent imparts a viscosity of from about 500 to 10,000 cps to the centerfill portion.

Claim 22 (previously presented): The chewing gum composition of claim 21 wherein the viscosity is from about 2,000 to 6,000 cps.

Claim 23 (previously presented): The chewing gum composition of claim 22 wherein the viscosity is from about 2,500 to 5,500 cps.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The chewing gum composition of claim 19 wherein the calcium-containing compound has an average particle size of from about 0.4 to 17 microns.

Claim 25 (currently amended): The chewing gum composition of claim 24 wherein the calcium-containing composition compound has an average particle size of from about 2 to 8 microns.

Claim 26 (previously presented): The chewing gum composition of claim 25 wherein the calcium-containing compound is calcium carbonate having an average particle size of from about 3 to 5 microns.

Claim 27 (currently amended): The chewing gum composition of claim 19 wherein from 45 to 55% of the calcium-containing compound is has a particle size of from about 0.6-1.0 microns and the remaining 55 to 45% has a particle size of about 14-17 microns.

Claim 28 (currently amended): The chewing gum composition of claim 27 wherein the calcium-compound calcium-containing compound is calcium carbonate,

and wherein 50% of the calcium carbonate has a particle size of about 0.8 micron and 50% has a particle size of about 15 microns.

Claim 29 (canceled without prejudice).

Claim 30 (currently amended): The chewing gum composition of claim 19 the calcium-containing compound is ~~selected from the group consisting of~~ calcium carbonate, ~~calcium citrate, calcium lactate, calcium gluconate, calcium maleate, calcium phosphate and mixtures thereof.~~

Claim 31 (previously presented): The chewing gum composition of claim 19 wherein the centerfill portion further comprises at least one ingredient selected from the group consisting of vitamins, minerals, mineral salts and botanicals.

Claim 32 (canceled without prejudice).

Claim 33 (previously presented): A method of delivering an effective amount of calcium to the oral cavity of a human being comprising chewing 3 to 5 pieces of the chewing gum composition of claim 19.